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NGC Certifies Rare 1942 and 1943 Wrong-planchet Cents

Posted on 5/3/2017

Two previously unknown 1943 "copper" cents and two other wrong-planchet errors were recently certified by NGC.

Numismatic Guaranty Corporation® (NGC®) has certified an extraordinary group of four 1942 and 1943 Lincoln Cents struck on the wrong planchets. Included in this group are two examples of the 1943 bronze (“copper”) cent, one of the most famous US error coins.

In 1943, the US Mint used zinc-coated steel for Lincoln Cents instead of the usual bronze (or “copper”) composition in an effort to preserve copper for the war effort. A small number of bronze planchets were nonetheless struck with these 1943-dated dies and escaped the Mint.

The 1943 bronze cents quickly piqued the interest of collectors, who were excited that something seemingly so mundane—a “copper” cent—could be so rare and valuable. Reports of finds in circulation added to the enthusiasm and high prices were soon reported.

This popularity has continued to the present day. In the *100 Greatest Mint Errors* book, co-authored by NGC grading finalizer and error coin specialist David J. Camire, the Philadelphia 1943 bronze cent was ranked #4. It has been estimated that only 10-12 Philadelphia 1943 bronze cents exist, a figure that does not include the two specimens recently certified by NGC.

1943 Bronze Cent
NGC MS 62 BN
Click images to enlarge.

1943 Bronze Cent
NGC MS 62 BN
Click images to enlarge.

These two new discoveries were graded NGC MS 62 BN and NGC MS 61 BN. The former specimen, at MS 62 BN, ranks as the second-finest 1943 bronze cent certified by NGC. The latter is particularly interesting, however, because it is the only example known with a large die break on the obverse.

1943 Bronze Cent Obverse Die Break
NGC MS 61 BN
Click images to enlarge.

1943 Bronze Cent Obverse Die Break
NGC MS 61 BN
Click images to enlarge.

“1943 Lincoln cents struck on bronze planchets are one of the ‘Holy Grails’ of US numismatics,” says Camire. “It is very exciting to see two examples in a single submission, especially the unique example featuring the die break on the obverse.”

The submission of the two 1943 bronze cents also included two Lincoln cents struck on planchets intended to be used for foreign coins that were then being struck by the Philadelphia Mint. There was a 1942 cent struck on an Ecuador 20 Centavos planchet, which NGC graded MS 63, and a 1943 cent on a Netherlands 25 cent planchet that was graded NGC MS 61.

1942 Cent Struck on An Ecuador 20 Centavos Planchet
Mint Error NGC MS 63
Click images to enlarge.

1942 Cent Struck on An Ecuador 20 Centavos Planchet
Mint Error NGC MS 63
Click images to enlarge.

“It is extremely unusual to see wrong planchet error cents from this time period,” adds Camire. “Recent appearances of such errors are few and far between.”

1942 Cent On Netherlands 25 Cent Planchet
Mint Error NGC MS 61
Click images to enlarge.

1942 Cent On Netherlands 25 Cent Planchet
Mint Error NGC MS 61
Click images to enlarge.

This incredible group of coins was submitted to NGC by the family of former US Mint employee Albert Michael Pratt. The coins were brought to the West Hernando Coin Club coin show in January 2017 where they were shown to John A. Zieman Jr. of Z-man's Coins, who submitted them to NGC on behalf of the family. “NGC has a great reputation for being very consistent, has awesome customer service and very fast turnaround times. It was a no brainer that I submitted these coins to NGC,” says John Zieman. For more information about Z-man's Coins, visit zmanscoins.com.

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United States

NGC Certifies Rare Great Britain Pattern Crown

Posted on 5/2/2017

The 1937 (1950) Great Britain Crown ESC-4030 is one of only two known.

Numismatic Guaranty Corporation® (NGC®) has certified one of only two known Great Britain 1950 Pattern Crowns. It is graded NGC MS 63.

1937 (1950) Great Britain Crown ESC-4030 with Thaler Edge and "120" Engraved
Click images to enlarge.

The 1950 Pattern Crowns were struck as the United Kingdom prepared to release a new crown coin in 1951 after a 13-year hiatus. The 1951 Crown was to be the first struck in copper-nickel; earlier crowns were minted in silver. It would also feature an edge inscription to celebrate the Festival of Britain, a large exhibition that would be held that summer.

The use of a new composition as well as the addition of edge lettering made it necessary for the Royal Mint to conduct extensive tests. Coins that are struck to

test a new design or composition are called “patterns,” while coins that are struck to test dies are called “trials.” This distinction can be difficult to make, however, when the mint is testing all of the above, as was the case with the 1950 Pattern Crowns.

In the modern era, patterns and trials are almost always retained or destroyed by the mint. Two of the 1950 Crown Patterns, however, are now known to exist in private collections, and one was recently submitted to NGC for authentication and grading.

The 1950 Crown patterns were struck before the 1951 Festival of Britain dies were completed. The Royal Mint, therefore, used leftover 1937 Crown obverse and reverse dies as well as an edge lettering collar that had been used to strike Maria Theresa Thaler restrikes in the 1940s. This odd pairing was likely one of convenience; the Royal Mint simply needed a collar that fit the diameter of the crown dies.

Thaler Edge of 1937 (1950) Great Britain Crown ESC-4030
Click images to enlarge.

Besides its unusual edge, this test piece also features the number “120” delicately etched into the obverse field in front of King George’s face. This number was hand-engraved by Royal Mint staff after the piece was made to represent the tonnage setting of the press used to strike it. This engraving helped the workers differentiate between the various test pieces.

“120” hand-engraved in field

The trials struck in 1950 to prepare for the 1951 Crown were not known to numismatists until they were reported by Stephen Hill in the *Numismatic Circular* in October 1998, nearly five decades after their creation. A mint worker likely saved these pieces from destruction at the time and they were later acquired by numismatists. Today, these interesting and important numismatic artifacts provide a rare glimpse into the inner workings of the Royal Mint in the mid-20th century.

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Modern Chinese Varieties: 1993 Gold 100Y Two Peacocks

Posted on 5/9/2017

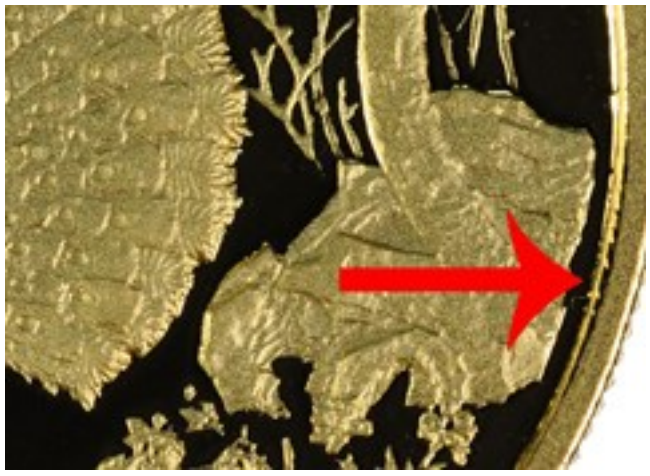
This is the 28th installment of our monthly column devoted to modern Chinese varieties.

Back in July 2015 we featured the 1993 S150Y 20oz Two Peacocks varieties of which there are examples of the devices near and far from rim. There are gold 100Y counterparts to this coin that also exhibit devices near and far from the rim. The gold versions, however, are even more distinct in that the reverse lettering is also of a different size.

The coin pictured below is an example of the variety with the devices near the rim. Also note the larger size of 100Y **(Photos 1 & 2)**.

Reverse side of the coin with the devices near the rim **(left)**
and close up image of the devices near the rim **(right)**
Click images to enlarge.

The other variety, pictured below, shows the devices far from the rim. Also note the smaller size of 100Y **(Photos 3 & 4)**.



Reverse side of the coin with the devices far from the rim **(left)**
and close up image of the devices far from the rim **(right)**
Click images to enlarge.

Both examples share a common obverse featuring the date and the Hall of Supreme Harmony of the Forbidden City in Beijing **(Photo 5)**.

Obverse side of a 1993 G100Y Two Peacocks coin
Click image to enlarge.

Look for another interesting variety to be featured next month.

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United States

NGC Registry: From Monkeys and Quetzals to Francs and Shillings

Posted by Collectors Society on 5/9/2017

New NGC Registry sets this month include China, Gabon, Great Britain, US Cents and more.

This month, the NGC Registry offers a variety of new coin collecting choices for your enjoyment. From Lincoln cents in the US to Silver $10 in remote Palau, there is something new for everyone. We have a wide variety of countries represented through new NGC Registry sets this month.

Lunar coins are always popular and enjoyed by collectors all over the world. Check out this new lunar medal set for China: China - Lunar: Lunar Medals, Type Set, Brass, 2005-2016, Proof

We appreciate your requests for new sets and look forward to offering new collecting options to you, our valued customers. Please keep those requests

coming! For May 2017, we have 11 new sets! Here is what's new this month:

New Category:

- Gabon

New Sets:

- China - Commemorative: Brass Medals, 30-45 mm, 2010-Date, Proof
- China - Lunar: Lunar Medals, Brass, Type Set, 2005-2016, Proof
- China - Lunar: Lunar Medals, 20g, Silver, 2017-2028, Proof
- Gabon: Silver 1000 Francs, 2012-Date, Mint State
- Great Britain - Type Sets: Charles II Type Set, 1660-1685, Circulation Issue
- Guatemala: Silver 1/4 Quetzal, 1925-1949, Complete Circulation Issue
- Guatemala: Silver Type Set, 1/4 Quetzal-Quetzal, 1925-2000, Circulation Issue
- Palau: Silver $10, 2009-Date, Mint State
- Palau: Silver $10, 2007-Date, Proof
- Thailand: Rama IX, Type Set, 1957-Date, Circulation Issue
- US: Cents: Lincoln Cents, SMS, 2005-Date, Complete

Do you have an NGC-certified coin in your hand and you're not sure where it may fit in the NGC Registry? We are here to help with requests and with any other questions you may have. Feel free to send us an email and let us know how we can help. Reach us easily via email at **registry@NGCcoin.com**.

If you're not familiar with the NGC Registry, take some time to explore it and see the many collecting options that are available. It is completely complimentary. If you have any questions, you may also click below for our help page:

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NGC Accepting Submissions at Las Vegas Numismatic Society Coin Show

Posted on 5/1/2017

Drop off your submissions at NGC's booth at the Las Vegas show.

NGC will be accepting regular submissions for all service levels* at the Las Vegas Numismatic Society Show, at the Westgate Resort & Casino in Las Vegas, NV from 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 18 - 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 20, 2017. Check with show staff for cut-off time. **Cut-off time may change due to submission volumes.** All submissions will be sent to our office in Sarasota, FL. Services include World Services, Ancient Coin Services, Bulk, PHOTO PROOF® and more.

Special Note:

- Due to the special handling required, NGC does not accept submissions of the following coins at this show for regular service submissions to be returned to the NGC offices: coins for First/Early Releases designations, coins NGC requires submitted in original Mint sealed packing, coins over 3.5" (90 mm) in diameter and .39" (10 mm) in depth, Coin & Chronicles sets, Coin & Currency sets, March of Dimes 3-coin set, West Point 2-coin set, San Francisco 2-coin Proof set, 30th Anniversary Eagles, 25th Anniversary Eagles, 20th Anniversary Eagles, American Liberty Series and 10th Anniversary Platinum Sets. These submissions must be sent directly to Sarasota, FL, by the submitter.

*Does not include 5-ounce coins.

Questions should be directed to NGC customer service at service@NGCcoin.com or 1-800-NGC-COIN (642-2646).

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NGC Ancients: The Numismatic Legacy of Trajan Decius

Posted on 5/9/2017

The volume of Decius coinage is remarkable, considering his short reign.

Gaius Messius Quintus Decius – best known to history as the Roman Emperor Trajan Decius (A.D. 249 to 251) – was born in about A.D. 201 in the small village of Budalia, near Sirmium in the Balkans. As a member of a senatorial family, Decius rose through the ranks both militarily and politically.

A billon tetradrachm of Trajan Decius issued at Antioch in Syria.
Click images to enlarge.

By the early 230s he was a distinguished senator and in 232 he attained the rank of consul, the highest position in the Roman senate. He also was governor of the provinces of Moesia, Germania Inferior and Hispania Tarraconensis. Early in the reign of Philip I (A.D. 244 to 249), Decius also served as urban prefect for the city of Rome.

A bronze sestertius of Philip I.
Click images to enlarge.

The 240s saw tensions rise along Rome's northern borders: various uprisings occurred, there were threats of Gothic invasions, all followed by the rebellion of the Roman commander Pacatian in Upper Moesia. Philip I appointed Decius governor of both Moesia and Pannonia with the mission of ending Pacatian's revolt and easing tensions along the border.

A rare double-denarius of the usurper Pacatian.
Click images to enlarge.

When Decius arrived, the revolt of Pacatian already had ended, but the rebels' troops remained unhappy. Recognizing Decius as a fellow Balkan, the troops threw their support behind him and hailed him as their candidate as emperor. To what degree he was complicit in this, or merely was complying with the motivated legions, is unknown.

On this sestertius, Decius celebrates the Illyrian army that had hailed him emperor.
Click images to enlarge.

Decius and his armies marched on Rome and in Macedon in 249 met the legions of Philip I. The reigning emperor was defeated and killed, and is unfortunate son, Philip II, was promptly murdered by the praetorian guards in Rome.

A billon tetradrachm of Philip II, issued at Alexandria, Egypt.
Click images to enlarge.

The senate, which saw Decius as one of their own due to his extensive experience in government, quickly recognized him as Rome's new emperor and gave him the name Trajan because both Decius and the earlier emperor Trajan (A.D. 98 to 117) had strong links to military activity in the Balkan region (principally Dacia, Illyria, Pannonia and Moesia).

On this sestertius, Decius celebrates the Pannonian army, which also had supported him.
Click images to enlarge.

Despite his short, two-year reign (mid 249 to June 251), Decius' coinage is both interesting and complex. The first coins issued in Rome for Decius celebrate his proclamation as emperor with some standard coinage types: ADVENTVS AVG (the emperors arrival in Rome), PAX AVGVSTI (peace of the emperor), VICTORIA AVG (victory of the emperor), and VIRTVS AVG (virtue of the emperor).

This gold aureus celebrates the arrival of Decius in Rome.
Click images to enlarge.

Decius also celebrated the men and troops responsible for his elevation to emperor with three new reverse types; GENIVS EXERCITVS ILLVRICIANI (genius of the Illyrian army), PANNONIA (which depicts a personification of the province) and DACIA (which shows of personification of Dacia holding a draco standard). This probably was a wise move politically, as very recently these Balkan troops had been responsible for the rebellions of Pacatian and Decius (and would be responsible for two more in the coming years).

This sestertius bears a lovely portrait of Decius' wife, the Empress Herennia Etruscilla.
Click images to enlarge.

Decius also chose to honor his family and to promote a dynasty with his coinage, with issues for his wife Herennia Etruscilla, his eldest son Herennius Etruscus

(whom he elevated to Caesar early in his reign) and his youngest some Hostilian (who was given the title Caesar late in Decius' reign). Very late in Decius' reign, Etruscus was promoted to emperor alongside his father, and a small, very rare, issue of coinage was issued for Etruscus as Augustus.

This provincial bronze of Jerusalem features the portraits of the brothers Herennius Etruscus and Hostilian on each side.
Click images to enlarge.

Throughout his reign, Decius issued the standard Imperial Roman coin denominations, including the gold aureus, the silver double-denarius and quinarius and the bronze sestertius and as. However, in AD 250, Decius overhauled the bronze coinage by introducing a new denomination, the double-sestertius, and by reintroducing a small bronze piece about the size of the long-since-abandoned semis, which probably was intended to be "reduced as".

A double-sestertius of Decius.
Click images to enlarge.

A ‘reduced as’ or ‘semis’ of Decius.
Click images to enlarge.

The double sestertius featured Decius’ radiate portrait on the obverse and those Decius issued for his wife featured her bust set upon a crescent. The new ‘reduced as’ or ‘semis’ was struck only for Decius and featured the standing figure of Mars on the reverse.

One of Decius’ last coinages was his famous ‘divi series’ of double-denarii on which he honored eleven deified Roman emperors: Augustus, Vespasian, Titus, Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Commodus, Septimius Severus, and Severus Alexander.

This ‘divi series’ double-denarius shows a flaming altar on its reverse and honors Decius’ namesake, the emperor Trajan.
Click images to enlarge.

This ‘divi series’ double-denarius shows an eagle on its reverse and honors the emperor Septimius Severus (A.D. 139 to 211).
Click images to enlarge.

Each coin paired a radiate portrait of one of the deified emperors with one of two reverse types – a flaming funerary altar or an eagle. This series is actively collected as it is historically interesting and makes a nice ‘short set’ of 22 coins.

Along with double-denarii from the main mint at Rome, the mint of Antioch produced double-denarii for Decius and his family. The reverse types are similar to those used in Rome, but the coins can be differentiated from the Rome issues by the style of die engraving, the fabric of the planchets and by the occasional inclusion of officina (mint workshop) numbers below the bust which can take the form of numbers or pellets.

This double-denarius of the Caesar Herennius Etruscus from Antioch has two pellets below the bust, indicating it was struck in the second officina.
Click images to enlarge.

Finally, the eastern cities of the Roman Empire produced a tremendous variety of provincial coinages in the name of Decius and members of his family. Great quantities of billon tetradrachms were produced at Antioch (in Syria) and Alexandria (in Egypt), and almost 60 other cities produced bronze coins of various sizes and denominations.

Decius is portrayed on this provincial bronze struck at the city of Syedra in Cilicia.
Click images to enlarge.

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Images courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group.

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Counterfeit Detection: 1963-D Roosevelt Dime with Altered Bands

Posted on 5/9/2017

Careful examination of this 1963-D Roosevelt Dime reveals an alteration to the torch.

Coins are altered in a variety of ways for a number of different reasons. Some alterations may be unintentional, such as corrosion or altered color due to improper storage. Other alterations—altered dates or added mintmarks—are attempts to make a coin resemble a rarer date.

There are also alterations that try to make the coin appear to be a better condition. In this category, various forms of improper cleaning are most common, but there are other methods that people employ to artificially enhance a coin's appearance. This 1963-D Roosevelt Dime features one of the more unusual alterations.

1963-D Roosevelt Dime with an odd alteration
Click images to enlarge.

Many collectors of Roosevelt Dimes look for specimens that have distinct, separated lines in the torch on the reverse. These coins are designated “FT” for Full Torch by NGC on the certification label and can sometimes carry a substantial premium over coins without the FT designation.

The 1963-D, for example, trades for $45 in MS 65 FT versus $20 in MS 65, $170 in MS 66 FT versus $30 in MS 66 and a whopping $1,500 in MS 67 FT versus $145 in MS 67, according to the NGC Price Guide. There is clearly a lot of incentive for someone to make a non-FT dime appear to be an FT dime, especially in high grades.

Altered bands on 1963-D Roosevelt Dime

Click images to enlarge.

A sharp-eyed NGC grader spotted that someone had attempted to do that with this coin. The torch’s bottom band had been reengraved in an attempt to receive the FT designation. This alteration is not particularly well done, as the line is far too sharp and also slants downward to the right. Nonetheless, even an amateur attempt such as this can fool many collectors.

Hopefully the person who submitted this coin did not pay a significant premium for it thinking that it was a Full Torch example. It is important to always closely examine any prospective purchase, but it is particularly necessary when dealing with a coin that purports to be rare and valuable. For added confidence, buy a coin that is certified by NGC—both the numeric grade and FT designation are covered by the NGC Guarantee.

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United States

USA Coin Album: A Memorial to the Memorial Cent

Posted on 5/9/2017

This most common of United States coins is already passing into history.

It has now been more than eight years since the last cents were coined with the Lincoln Memorial reverse. Adopted in 1959, this imagery had a solid run of 50 years, the same as for its predecessor design featuring heraldic wheat ears. Hundreds of billions of these coins were produced, and they remain the dominant type seen in circulation, though they will ultimately be overtaken by the current design featuring the Union Shield. Given the reluctance of Congress to recognize the obvious obsolescence of the cent, it may be that Shield cents will be in production for 50 years, as well. By that time each one may cost a dollar to produce!

The decision to change the reverse of the Lincoln cent was prompted by the sesquicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth in 1959, just as the original edition had resulted from a desire to mark its centennial in 1909. The Treasury Department solicited designs from the Philadelphia Mint's own engraving staff that would depict the Lincoln Memorial, which had been erected in 1922 at the western end of the National Mall in Washington, DC. A drawing by Assistant Engraver Frank Gasparro was selected, and this was then forwarded to the Commission of Fine Arts for comment and, it was hoped, approval. The latter was not a legal requirement, as official selection of the design was in the hands of Treasury Secretary Robert B. Anderson. The CFA viewed Gasparro's drawing November 6, 1958, giving it conditional approval. It was suggested that the words LINCOLN MEMORIAL be removed from beneath the building and that the 13 stars surrounding the structure also be deleted. As we now know, these changes were indeed made, and also removed from the final design were the two pellets, or legend stops, which appeared at the beginning and ending of UNITED STATES oF AMERICA. The CFA challenged the architectural accuracy of the structure as Gasparro had drawn it, but the urgency of having dies ready on January 2, 1959

precluded any further changes.

Collectors were naturally excited at the prospect of a new design for what was then the most popularly collected series of United States coins. The 1959(P) and 1959-D cents were widely hoarded, but this was not a remarkable event. The saving of new coins by the roll had been popular since the mid 1930s, and this activity progressed to a speculative frenzy around the same time that the Lincoln Memorial cent debuted. I'll have more to say about such hoarding next month.

A detailed examination of the entire series from 1959 through its termination in 2008 is beyond the scope of this column, but there are a few bullet points worthy of mention. The cents struck 1959-1964 are unremarkable on most counts, as they were coined in the billions at the Philadelphia and Denver Mints. Many of the 1964-dated pieces were actually struck during 1965 (see this column for June, 2016). There was a frenzy in the hobby created over the discovery of two distinctive date sizes for the 1960 issue from both mints. Ultimately, only the 1960(P) Small Date cents, both the currency pieces and the proofs, proved to have small enough mintages to warrant speculator attention. Nevertheless, the whole episode was a huge boost to the coin hobby and was widely reported in the non-numismatic media.

The cents dated 1965-67 were struck at three mints, the San Francisco Assay Office resuming coinage for the first time since 1955, yet none of these coins are identified as to mint of origin. Mintmarks were restored in 1968, and San Francisco cents were struck for circulation through 1974 with its popular 'S' mintmark. The hoarding of such pieces prompted the removal of this attractive letter starting with 1975's production, yet both the SFAO and the West Point Bullion Depository coined anonymous cents for several years thereafter.

The relief of the Lincoln cent's obverse was systematically lowered beginning in 1969 to restore details and improve die life, with further alterations occurring during the

1970s. The president's shoulder was hollowed out in 1984 to end the characteristic weakness of the Latin legend on this coin type's reverse. Additional flattening of the portrait began in the 1990s, and it is presently little more than a two-dimensional caricature of the 1909 bust. The Memorial reverse has been altered slightly over the years, but the fairly low relief of the 1959 original served it well through the end of this type in 2008.

When I began collecting cents from circulation in 1965, the Lincoln Memorial type already predominated, with perhaps just 20% of the cents I encountered being Wheat Ear coins dating 1940-58 (earlier dates were already scarce, though not impossible to find). All the Memorial cents were then common, with the exception of 1959(P) and 1960(P) Small Date. I did find those within a year or two, and this was well before it occurred to me to search rolls from the bank. Those pieces remained the only circulated coins in my set of Lincoln Memorial cents, as the others could still be found in bright red condition.

In next month's column I'll take a look at how the collecting of Lincoln Memorial cents has evolved from the casual sort of collecting of my youth to the much more sophisticated (and expensive) pursuit that it is today.

David W. Lange's column, "USA Coin Album," appears monthly in The Numismatist, *the official publication of the American Numismatic Association.*

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Chinese Coins: Panda Coins Reach 35

Posted by Peter Anthony on 5/9/2017

Put another candle on the birthday cake.

One, two, three, four up and down lines plus one diagonal stroke counts to five. It's a natural number: there are five fingers, five toes, five senses and five traditional Asian elements (water, fire, earth, wood, and metal). The People's Republic of China flag has five stars. In China, a five starts with a horizontal line. Next a vertical descends below it just like for a T. That mark gets slashed in half and then that line makes a right turn downward. Finally, one horizontal line forms the base. The four strokes efficiently produce five lines like this: 五. This is the character "wu," meaning 5.

Every fifth year the China Mint (later, China Gold Coin Inc., or CGCI) marks the growth of the Panda series. This is the only Chinese coin series that receives this recognition. The first Panda coins were released in 1982. Five years later in 1987, one-ounce and five-ounce silver proof Panda coins were minted to celebrate the occasion. Every half-decade since then the Mint has thrown another party for collectors. For example, the only piedfort coins in the Panda series mark the 10th anniversary in 1991, not to mention the largest and highest priced Panda coin of all time: a 10,000 Yuan 5 kilogram gold Panda. Only ten were struck at the Shenyang Mint.

1996 saw the release of three gold coins with special legends on the obverse below the Temple of Heaven. The 20th anniversary celebration gave the world an impressive kilo silver Panda with two gold inlays, as well as a 1/10 oz. platinum Panda. This platinum coin is the only one from China that features a panda on both sides.

For the 25th anniversary in 2007 China Gold Coin Inc. released a pair of 25-coin sets, one gold and the other silver. The gold coins were just 1/25 oz. each, so that

a complete set adds up to a single ounce of pure gold. Both sets were presented inside large, beautiful wooden cases.

Some of the most interesting coins were minted for the 30th anniversary in 2012. There were five kinds of coins struck and each of them has a festive design. The most prominent is the 2,000 Yuan 5 oz. gold coin designed by Ms. Chang Huan. (Note: the story of how she created this coin's exceptional design is told in the soon-to-be-released *Gold & Silver Panda Coin Buyer's Guide 3*.)

Probably the best-known 2012 anniversary Panda is a ¼ oz. silver 3 Yuan coin. This little commemorative displays a smiling Panda's face alongside the numeral three. The round Panda's head does double duty as a zero in the design to form the number 30. This little bear has a mintage of 300,000. It remains popular and relatively expensive despite the significant mintage.

Another 30th anniversary coin has a much smaller mintage and is not nearly as easy to find. This is a 50 Yuan silver commemorative that sports a charming and very well drawn image of a pair of Panda cubs with their mother. The final anniversary coin of the year is a 1/10 oz. gold that stylishly depicts a Panda and her cub reflected in a pool of water.

2017 is the 35th year of Panda coins and there will, indeed, be new coins issued for the latest birthday. In June three coins are slated for release: a large bimetallic Panda that contains 30 grams of gold and 12 grams of silver (mintage 6,000), a 5 gram gold (mintage 50,000) and a 15 gram silver with a mintage of 200,000. These will continue a tradition that celebrates the present and future of Panda coins. Join the party!

Peter Anthony is an expert on Chinese modern coins with a particular focus on Panda coins. He is an analyst for the NGC Chinese Modern Coin Price Guide as well as a consultant on Chinese modern coins.

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United States

From the NGC Archives: 1903 Louisiana Purchase Exposition Gold Dollar

Posted on 5/9/2017

The Louisiana Purchase Exposition of 1904 was one of the greatest of the world's fairs, in an era when such splendid gatherings were commonplace.

The host city was St. Louis, and this event was later memorialized in the 1944 motion picture "Meet me at the Fair." To help fund the exposition, souvenir gold dollars featuring the portraits of either William McKinley or Thomas Jefferson were sold for three dollars each.

Click images to enlarge.

The recipients of the rare proof strikings of the Louisiana Purchase-McKinley Gold Dollar were evidently not numismatists. Therefore, it's nothing less than miraculous that a gem specimen could survive in the hands of someone not versed in the proper care of coins. One of just 100 pieces minted, this beauty is a gem indeed. A glorious cameo proof, this dollar exhibits frosted devices set within deeply reflective fields. Its surfaces are pristine and they reveal a couple blushes of iridescent toning. Fully struck, this coin is superb in all respects.

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